

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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S/S:MR ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 109763

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADORS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 4005T ACTION SECSTATE 05 MAY

QUOTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4005

NODIS

FOR SECREARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: THE ELECTIONS AND SECURITY

1. I AM HOLDING MY BREATH BUT WE MAY NOW REPEAT NOW HAVE
THE SORT OF RELATIVE CALM NEEDED FOR SATURDAY'S ELECTION.
IT IS VERY FRAGILE AND MAY NOT REPEAT NOT HOLD UP.

AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTED FROM MY CABLES, I HAVE BEEN
PREACHING NON-VIOLENCE IN A BLUSTERING RATHER THAN GANDHI

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WAY. WHETHER THAT OR SHEER EXHAUSTION IS THE MAJOR

FACTOR, I CANNOT SAY. IN ANY CASE, JUMBLATT HAS HAD A WARNING. PRIMIN KARAME, WHO PRESIDES ON THE MIXED SECURITY COMMITTEE HAS EVIDENTLY STIFFENED UP A BIT. THE PLA IS MOVING OUT ALONG ALLENBY STREET, THE NEW DIVIDING LINE THROUGH THE CITY. IT SEEMS WILLING THIS TIME TO USE FORCE. LAST NIGHT'S SHELLING WAS LARGELY CONFINED TO THE BATTLE ZONE, AND THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO RANDOM FIRING IN THE CITY. ANOTHER DAY AND NIGHT OF COMPARATIVE QUIET AND, HOPEFULLY, FURTHER PLA EFFORTS TO SEPARATE THE FIGHTERS WOULD HAVE A GREAT PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST.

2. THE PROBLEM, I FEAR, IS THAT FRIDAY NIGHT THE REJECTIONISTS AND/OR HOTHEADS MAY WELL TRY TO THROW A MONKEY-WRENCH INTO THE POLITICAL MACHINERY SO AS TO PREVENT SATURDAY'S ELECTION. IF THEY CAN STIMULATE A GENERALIZED FIRE-FIGHT, THEY WILL ACCOMPLISH JUST THAT.

3. I'LL BE TALKING TO THE MARONITES TONIGHT AND TOMORROW, SPENDING THE NIGHT SOMEWHERE ON THE MOUNTAIN. I WILL BE MAKING THE SAME POINTS. MEANWHILE, I AM TALKING TO A LOT OF SECOND ECHELON POLITICIANS HERE, TRYING TO GET THEM TO REALIZE WHAT A MESS THEY HAVE MADE AND HOW THEY MUST ACT RESPONSIBLY.

4. ONE OF PROBLEMS THAT HAS BEEN OBVIOUS ALL ALONG BUT WHICH IS GETTING ACUTE NOW IS THE EDDE-SARKIS RIVALRY. IT MAY FAST BE APPROACHING A STAND-OFF. VARIOUS GROUPS, INCLUDING THE SO-CALLED THIRD FORCE THAT HOUSE SPEAKER ASSAD HAS ORGANIZED, ARE TALKING ABOUT THE NEED FOR A COMPROMISE CANDIDATE. I DON'T THINK WE CAN EXCLUDE THIS AND IT COULD BE THAT WE MIGHT WANT TO MAKE THIS POINT KNOWN. A NAME THAT POPS UP NOW AND THEN CS THE PATRIARCH. IT IS NOT REPEAT NOT A BAD IDEA, PROVIDED HE TOOK THE JOB FOR A LIMITED TIME AND THEN WENT BACK TO CHURCH. HE'S A DECENT MAN, RESPECTED BY THE MOSLEMS AND THEREFORE DISLIKED BY EXTREMIST MARONITES. IN

ANY CASE, HE WOULDN'T BE A MARARIOS. OF COURSE, ANY CALL FOR A THIRD MAN MUST COME KROM THE LEBANESE.

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OTHERWISE, THE SYRIANS WOULD ACCUSE US OF EVERYTHING POSSIBLE. AS OF THIS MOMENT, CHANCES ARE SLIM BUT A FURTHER POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTION, EITHER BECAUSE OF LACK OF SECURITY OR FEARS THAT THE PARLIAMENT IS TOO DIVIDED, COULD LEAD TO LEBANESE THINKING ALONG SUCH A LINE AND EVEN TO GRUDGING SYRIAN AGREEMENT.

BROWN

UNQUOTE SISVO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECURITY, CAT-A, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAY 1976
Decapton Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE109763
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:EGABINGTON:MAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: N760003-0697
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760587/aaaacwid.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE ELECTIONS AND SECURITY
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, LE, (JUMBLATT, KAMAL)
To: DAMASCUS GUATEMALA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006